A

LETTER

FROM THE

Heer Lieutenant-Admiral

DE RUYTER,

TO THE

States-General of the *United-Provinces*;

Giving an Account of the

Late Engagement

Between him, and the

FRENCH FLEET,

On the Coast of *SICILY.*

Tranſlated out of Dutch, *as it was Printed at the* Hague.

In the *Savoy*,
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LETTER

FROM THE

Hon. Edmund Randolph

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY THE

GOVERNOR

OF

VIRGINIA;

Containing a Vindication of his Conduct in the late Transaction

RELATIVE TO

FRENCH AND BRITISH INTERFERENCE.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed by FRANCIS CHILDS and JOHN SWAINE.

M,DCC,XCIV.

A Letter from the Heer, Lieutenant-Admiral de Ruyter, *written to the States-General of the* United Provinces, *giving an Account of the late Engagement, between him and the French Fleet, on the Coast of* Sicily.

High and Mighty Lords,

MY Lords, Since my last to your Hi. and Mi. of the 10 of *December* past, from the Bay of *Callary*, we safely arrived the 20. following in the morning, with the greatest part of your Fleet, in the Bay of *Melazzo*, and by my Secretary, made known to the Marquis of *Villa Franca*, Viceroy of the Kingdom of *Sicily*, our arrival, with the offer of our service. His Excellency did me the Honour that very afternoon, to come and visit me on board my Ship, and to bid me welcome; as I the next day, gave my Self the Honour to return his Excellencies Visit. In both which Visits, nothing of importance happened. I received his Excellency with all Civility, and at his going away, gave him the respect due to a Person of his high Quality; and on the other side, his Excellency received me with the civilities required, in respect to your Hi. and Mi. amidst the Salutes of the Canon of the Town, and of the Castle, and in the same manner dismist me with great courtesy.

And that we might not here spend our time in vain, I thought fit, provisionally, to appoint Capt. *Nicholas Verschoor*, Rear-Admiral, for this Expedition, and to depute *Jacob Benkhout*, and the

Count of *Stirum*, assisted by my Secretary, to the Marquis *de Villa Franca*, to concert with his Excellency, what ought to be most speedily undertaken against the common Enemy, with your Hi. and Mi. Fleet, and withal, earnestly to press, that as many *Spanish* Men of War and Gallies, as was possible, might be joyned with us, that so we might be the stronger, in case a considerable force of the Enemies, should happen to meet us at Sea; whereupon, with the most forcible Reasons, and by the importance, and necessity of the thing, his Excellency was finally perswaded, upon the 31 of the last month, to conclude; That we should, with your Hi. and Mi. Fleet, pass the *Fare* of *Messina*, to cut off from the Enemy, who cruised to and fro, between the Cape *De la Molina*, and the Cape *del Arme*, all succors designed to *Messina*, while his Excellency, in the mean time, gave Order, that the *Spanish* Men of War lying at *Palermo*, under the Command of the Prince of *Montesarchio*, should, with all speed, be got ready; adding, in the interim, under your Hi. and Mi. Flag, the *Spanish* man of war, named *Nostra Signora del Rosario*, mounted with 50 Guns, and 300 Men, Commanded by Capt. *de Saye*, with 9 Gallies, Commanded by Don *Beltran de Gavarra*, Lieutenant, and Governour-General of the *Neopolitan* Gallies. The night, between the 31 past, and the 1 instant, the Vice-Admiral *de Haen*, with the nine Ships under his Command, who on the 8*th* of *Nov.* last, was separated from us in a Storm, happily joyned us in the Bay of *Melazzo*; and thereupon, the night of the said 1 instant, we set sail together, taking our course along the Coast, towards the Streight of *Messina*, with intention to pass the said *Streight*, and afterwards the said appointed Rendezvouz, between the *Cape de la Molina*, and *Cape del Arme*; but in the latter part of the night it was very calm, and the next day, the wind proved contrary.

The

The Second inſtant in the Morning, very early, the *Spaniards* in our ſight, Attacked a ſmall place called *Ibiſo*, which was Manned with French and Rebels, and after three hours diſpute, took it, with the loſs of ten Men, and ſome Wounded, and on the ſide of the Enemy, about ſixty Killed, beſides Wounded, and ſeventy taken Priſoners, among which was a Collonel, a *Milaneſe* by Birth, who had quitted the Spaniſh Service: In the mean time, the Marquis *de Villa Franca*, Viceroy of the Iſland of *Sicily* aforeſaid, ſent ſeveral Feluccas to the *Fare*, (where we continued Cruiſing till the fifth inſtant) with advice, that a conſiderable Fleet of the Enemies Ships, were Sailed from *Thoulon*, for the Succouring of *Meſſina*; and that they had been firſt ſeen by thoſe of *Leghorne*, and afterwards from the Iſlands lying before the ſaid Kingdom of *Sicily*, and lately from the Iſle of *Lipari*, whereupon, (finding, that by reaſon of the ſaid contrary Winds, we could not come to paſs the ſaid *Streight*,) I reſolved to Tack the ſixth inſtant in the Morning, and to ſtand to the Weſtward, to find out the Enemy; we advanced that day, cloſe under the ſaid Iſland of *Lipari*, but could not from our Shrowds, as yet diſcover the Enemy, notwithſtanding we had advice, by Barks and Felucca's from all ſides, that the ſaid Enemies Fleet was ſtill obſerved from the ſhoar. I endeavored to inform my ſelf, how the Enemy bore from us, and which way they ſteered, that ſo we might be the ſooner with them; the firſt they could well enough tell me, but in the latter, they did ſo vary, that I was forced to ſend off one of my Lieutenants in a Felucca, with ſome of the moſt knowing Felucca Men, towards the Iſland *Salinas*, if poſſible, to diſcover from the Hills, (which are very high) the Enemies courſe; upon whoſe return, we ſteered the night following Northwards towards them; the next morning, with the opening of the day, the Wind *S. S. W.* a ſmal Gale, we got ſight of them, being Thirty Sail, counting a *Polacke* and

a *Satie*, about three miles from us; and to oblige them to an Engagement yet that day, we, and all the Ships of your Hi. and Mi. Fleet, put up all the Sail they could possibly bear, the sooner to reach the Enemy, which we so far did, that some of the forwardest of them, were forced to furl some of their Sails, and to stay for those who were not so good Sailers, keeping in the mean time, as near the Wind as was possible, to gain an advantage upon us; about three in the afternoon, I gave the sign, to the end the head Officers, Captains, and Commanders, might, pursuant to their general, and particular Instructions, put themselves into their several stations, as was accordingly done, but in the mean time the night came on; so that I resolved to defer the Attack for that day, and to call the head Officers on bord my Ship, to bid them hold themselves ready against the next day, being the eighth instant, to Attack the Enemy, recommending to them, at the same time, that for the Love of their Country, and the sooner to obtain an Honorable and Lasting Peace, they would take care of their Honor and Oath, which they all taking me by the hand, unanimously promised.

I sent a halfe Galley (so called) halfe way, between us and the Enemy, to observe them in the night, directing the Capt. that so long as they held the same course with us, he should every Glass fire a Gun; and in case the Enemy happened to Tack, to retreat, shooting all the way to us; towards the latter part of the night, the Wind increased, and blew so hard from the *W. S. W.* that not only he was obliged to quit his Post, but likewise the other nine *Spanish* Gallies, who stood towards *Lipari*, to cover themselves under the shore: In the last of the Night-watch, the Enemy gave the signe to Tack, whereupon, I likewise gave the signe to Tack; at break of day, we again got sight of them, they bearing along with us, but the Wind had sharpened upon us, six Points, and

was

was ſo bare, that the Enemy got the Luffe.

About 9 a clock, they being in good Order, and well ranked, came upon us like Soldiers, as we courageiouſly,, and likewiſe in good Order expected them, ſo that within an hour after the foremoſt Ships on both ſides, began to fire upon each other, which laſted about three hours ſo furiouſly, (that I never in my life was in ſharper firing) when one of the Enemies Fireſhips, under the favour of the Smoak, and the Cannon of their Vice-Admiral, came down upon us, but we ſhot down his Maſts, and diſabled him, ſo that the Captain was forced himſelf to ſet fire to her, for fear of her falling into our hands; about halfe an hour after, a ſecond of the Enemies Fire-Ships had her Maſts ſhot down, and was burnt; the Fight laſted with the Reer-Admiral *Verſchoor*, who had the Van, and with us, till between four and five in the afternoon, and with the Vice-Admiral *de Haen*, who had the Rear, and conſequently, came laſt into the Fight, till dark night, which likewiſe parted them; with the ſetting of the Sun, a conſiderable Ship of War of the Enemies ſunk in our ſight, others will have it, that there is a ſecond ſunk, which neither I, nor any of my Ship ſaw; after the Fight, the ſaid Nine Galleys came to us again, and continued with us all the night. The head Officers and Captains, of your Hi. and Mi. Fleet, fought bravely, and without ceaſing, as the Enemy likewiſe did on their ſide; during the Fight it was extream calm; we and all your Hi. and Mi. Fleet, hath ſuffered great damage in our Maſts, Tackle, and Sails. The night paſt, we have been employed to put up new Staies, to ſtop Leaks, bring new Sails to the Yards, and to mend our Tackle, ſo that we, and moſt all of the other Ships, are in a condition to make head againſt the Enemy, who, (as much as we can diſcern from our ſhrowds,) lye on our Lee, but the weather is very calm, ſo that we ſhall not be able to get up with one another this day.

Captain

AX 15
15

Captain *Gillis Schey*, commanding the Ship *Esse*
came the last night on board me, and acquainted me
that he had received one or more shots under water
and that he could not find the Leak, by which, muc
water was come into his Ship, and had wet all hi
Powder, and therefore desired that we would send
Carpenter on board him, to help to find it; we sen
the Captains *Berkout*, and *Van Abcoude*, with ou
chief Carpenter on board him, who heard the Leak
but could not find it, wherefore I desired Don *Beltra*
de Guavarra, Lieutenant-General of the said Galleys
to send two of his Galleys to towe the said Ship th
Essen to *Palermo*; or some other Port, as the wind
should most favor, which he immediately granted;
likewise put into the hands of Captain *Schey*, an Ac
of Permission, to get the said Ship, into the first and
most convenient Port, and there to repair the same
with all possible diligence; and for the better executi
on of this Order, the Commanders *Wybrandtz Ba*
rentz Commanding a *Snaw*, and *Jacob Statlander*, in
the *Fluyt*, the *Swarte Tas*, are directed to keep with
the said Captain *Schey*, to assist him in all things.

This Morning I called the Head Officers, Captains
and Commanders on board me, to know what damage
they had sustained, and what they most wanted.

The Reer-Admiral *Verschoor* in the Fight yester
day, slept in the Lord in the bed of Honor. We
can fairly see the Prince of *Montesarchio*, with Nine
Sail from our Ship, so that by the help of God, we
hope to joyn his Excellency yet this day.

Wherewith, *&c.* in the Ship the *Erendracht*
Sailing Westward of the Island *Alicur*, the Ninth o
January, 1676.

Michiel Ad. Ruyter

FINIS.

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